

*To the Honourable the KNIGHTS, CITIZENS, and
BURGESSES in PARLIAMENT assembled,*

The PETITION of the undersigned Agents for the American
Loyalists, in behalf of themselves and their Constituents,

HUMBLY SHEWETH,

THAT your Petitioners are Subjects of the British
Empire, and, in common with their fellow Citizens, entitled to its Protection
and Justice,

That by the immutable Principles of natural Equity, and the fundamental
Laws of all civil Societies, the Expences, Burthens, and Sacrifices necessary
to the common Benefit and Safety ought to be equitably borne by all the
Citizens in a just Proportion.

That the Duties of Allegiance and Protection, which form and support the
Union of Society, are reciprocal between the Subject and Sovereign, and
mutual Considerations for each other; and therefore the Subject who fulfils his
Duty of Allegiance in Times of public Danger is certainly entitled to public
Protection and Indemnity.

That in the Years 1764 and 1767, when a violent and riotous Opposition
arose in America to the Sovereign Authority of Parliament, both Houses by
their Resolutions declared, "That such Persons who had manifested a Desire
"to comply with, or to assist in carrying into Execution, any Acts of the
"Legislature relating to the Colonies in North America, ought to have full
"and ample Compensation for any Injury or Damage sustained on that Account."
And that such Persons were entitled to, and should assuredly have, the
Protection of the House of Commons of Great Britain.

That in 1775, when a dangerous Rebellion against the Sovereign Rights
of the British Legislature had broke out in America, his Majesty conceived
that the Aid of his Subjects would be necessary to reduce it; and therefore
by his Proclamation he called on all for their Assistance, and "that none
"might neglect or violate their Duty through Ignorance thereof," he further
declared, "That all his faithful Subjects were bound by Law to be aiding
"and assisting in suppressing the Rebellion; and that there could be no
"Doubt of the Protection which the Law would afford to their Loyalty and
"Zeal."

That

That your Petitioners, in dutiful Obedience to the Call of their Sovereign, and the two Houses of Parliament, and relying on the Justice and Protection thus held up before them, have *alone* stepped forth from the great Body of British Subjects, who were *equally* called on and *equally* interested in the public Safety. And in consequence of their loyal and zealous Exertions have been deprived of their Fortunes by the Insurgents, and have besides encountered a Variety of the most imminent Dangers, and suffered extreme Distress, from which their fellow Subjects have been entirely *exempt*, and for which your Honourable House can make them no adequate Compensation.

That, moreover, the Estates and Fortunes of your Petitioners, which the British Government, by the essential Laws of its Union, was bound to regain and restore to them, have been devoted and ceded by that Government to the American States, as the Purchase and Price of Peace for the whole Empire.

Thus circumstanced, your Petitioners conceive that they have, under the fundamental Laws of the British Constitution, the Resolutions of both Houses of Parliament, the royal Faith pledged to them in his Majesty's Proclamation, and under all the Precedents of Parliamentary Justice on similar and much less meritorious Occasions, not only an equitable but a lawful right to a just Compensation for their Estates and Property so devoted to the national Peace and Safety. And that nothing less than an equal Distribution of their Losses thus incurred among their fellow Subjects, who are in the Enjoyment of the Benefits and Security so purchased at their Expence, can be consistent with Law and Justice.

That in the Year 1783, sensible of the Justice due to your Petitioners, the Parliament passed an Act appointing Commissioners to enquire into their Losses thus sustained, for the Purpose of making them due Compensation. That the Commissioners, having investigated a large Number of their Claims, have made two several Reports thereof to the Lords of his Majesty's Treasury, which your Petitioners have Reason to believe contain their Decision on what has been lost by the respective Claimants, who anxiously expected that the said Reports would have been laid before your Honourable House, in Order that Compensation might be made to those comprehended in them.

That it is impossible to describe the poignant Distress under which many of the American Loyalists now labour; and which must daily encrease, should the Justice of Parliament be delayed until all the Claims are liquidated and reported; but your Petitioners would be greatly deficient in their Duty to their Constituents, if they should omit to represent to the humane and just Consideration of your Honourable House, that ten Years have elapsed since many of them have been deprived of their Fortunes, and with their helpless Families reduced from independent Affluence to Poverty and Want; some of them are now languishing in British Gaols, others indebted

to their Creditors, who have lent them Money barely to support their Existence, and who, unless speedily relieved, must sink more than the Value of their Claims when received, and be in a worse Condition than if they had never made them. Others have already sunk under the Pressure and Severity of their Misfortunes; and that others must, in all Probability, soon meet the same melancholy Fate, should the Justice due to them be longer postponed. **not withstanding* But that, on the Contrary, should Provision be now made for *any support* Payment of those, whose Claims have been settled and reported, it will not *thankfully acknowledge* only relieve *them* from their Distress, but give a Credit to the Others whose *being given from* Claims remain to be considered, and enable *all of them* to provide for their *little life and* wretched Families, and become again useful Members of Society. *by Parliament*

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray, that your Honourable House will take their Case under your Consideration, and make such Provision for the Payment of the Sums adjudged to be due to the respective Claimants, as you in your Wisdom and Justice shall think reasonable; or, if this cannot be done in the present Session, that your Honourable House would by a Vote now, declare that the Claims reported, and to be reported by the Commissioners, shall be considered as a Part of the unfunded Debts of the Nation.

And your Petitioners further pray, that if any Doubt should remain respecting their right to the Sums reported to be due, that they may be heard by Counsel at the Bar of your Honourable House.

And your Petitioners, as in Duty bound, shall ever pray.

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